Corporate Program Case Study

IEEE-SA/Accellera Partnership

Relationship Between the IEEE-SA Corporate Program
and Accellera Helps Design Automation Technology
Gain Reach and Recognition

Since 2000, Accellera, a consortium of companies in the electronic design automation field, has been developing and promoting use of design and verification specifications for semiconductors, systems, and design-tool companies. Ten of those documents have been finalized and issued in collaboration with the IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA) as IEEE standards.

"Working with IEEE-SA brings these standards world-wide recognition and reach," says Yatin Trivedi, Accellera's treasurer and a long-time member of its board of directors. "IEEE-SA is recognized globally as a leading standards-development organization for a broad range of technical areas. Standards approved or ratified by IEEE are considered 'good for you' without question. Accellera has a good reputation, but not on the same scale as IEEE or IEEE-SA. IEEE-SA has a vast, international member base, as well as relationships with organizations such as IEC and other international and national standards bodies. These factors make IEEE standards based on Accellera documents acceptable to a broad, world-wide audience."

"And people know and expect that IEEE's standards development process is rigorous, open, fair, peer-reviewed, and comprehensive," adds Trivedi. The material that organizations like Accellera submit is viewed as a strong starting contribution to an IEEE entity standards working group (WG).

Industry organizations submit specifications to IEEE with the full understanding that they'll no longer have the control they once had over the document's content--but the standards that result are more useful. IEEE entity standards WG membership is open to any interested entity that fulfills all WG membership requirements, and the final standard is likely to have changes, major or minor, from the original contribution. The variety of viewpoints and voices in the working groups helps make the standards more robust, and the resultant stability and longevity of a standard encourages rapid, widespread adoption. The IEEE brand on a standard gives companies (users and vendors) the confidence they need to invest in implementing and using it. The new products that arise from these standards often open new markets.

"The key value of Accellera working with the IEEE," says Karen Pieper, who chairs the IEEE 1800™ SystemVerilog Working Group and Accellera's Technical Committee, "is that IEEE-SA's ratification of a standard is the industry-accepted milestone that indicates maturity and usability of a technology in production environments."

"The strong partnership between Accellera and IEEE-SA helps bring useful standards forward for worldwide use," Pieper adds. "In the case of IEEE 1800™ (also known as the SystemVerilog standard), this partnership created an innovative hardware design language and then drove widespread industry interest and adoption." (Within two years, System Verilog support increased from 6 companies with 9 products to 137 companies with more than 350 products.) "The IEEE also provided a fast-track adoption path to the IEC, and facilitated widespread distribution through its website."

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